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For Immediate Release

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JOHNSTOWN, PA - Congressman John P. Murtha announced today, at the annual Showcase for Commerce, that the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and the University of Pittsburgh Diabetes Institute (UPDI) have partnered with the Air Force Surgeon General (AF/SGR) to develop diabetes prevention tools that may become a standard method of care for AF medical beneficiaries.

Over 21 million Americans are living with diabetes and another 41 million are at risk for developing the disease. Research has found that with proper education, those at risk are able to prevent or delay the disease, and those who have been diagnosed are better equipped to make informed decisions about their health.

"We have a diabetes epidemic in Western Pennsylvania and in military families," said Murtha. "I have made it my priority to ensure that joint programs like the one between the UPDI and the AF have the resources they need to produce the tools necessary to promote healthy life-style changes."

"Diabetes is a chronic disease and should be treated as such. Our research at UPDI has focused on developing ways to deliver the kind of information that people need to prevent and successfully live with diabetes," said Linda Siminerio, RN, Ph.D., director of the UPDI. "In this age of technology, we know that people receive information in a variety of ways, so we developed diabetes prevention tools that can be accessed via the Internet, CD and DVD. It's important that people receive the right information in order to end this epidemic of diabetes."

The UPDI, in partnership with the UPMC and AF/SGR, has developed practical tools that will allow almost anyone with diabetes or anyone at risk of developing diabetes access to lifestyle intervention tools and techniques. Three of these valuable tools are currently being deployed:

The Virtual Lifestyle Management Tool - This tool is an online comprehensive lifestyle intervention program designed to promote long-term weight loss. The Internet program offers 16 weeks of lessons focusing on healthy eating, physical activity and tips for lifestyle change. Participants are supported by online chat sessions with secure messages directly tied to their electronic medical record.

Group Lifestyle Balance (GLB) CD/DVD - This tool utilizes the Group Lifestyle Balance program, a modified version of the original 16-week intervention delivered in the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). The DPP was a national research trial showing that diabetes can be prevented or delayed by making small lifestyle changes. The 12-session GLB program was designed to teach individuals healthy diet and exercise habits and to establish healthy lifestyle goals for adults who

are overweight and have been diagnosed as being at-risk for diabetes. The newly developed CD and DVD will be delivered to participants in the GLB program in western Pennsylvania and eventually to all USAF participants. The GLB is also delivered in a group class setting and is currently available at the DPSC in Oakland, PA, the Conemaugh Diabetes Institute in Johnstown, PA and through a research study at UPMC Braddock.

"Healthy Plate" Interactive Web Tool - This tool is a new interactive Web tool developed by Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh's Weight Management and Wellness Center that encourages children to make healthier choices by monitoring their food and beverage intake. The program provides immediate feedback about sugar, fat, and calorie content while allowing children and parents to see the quality and quantity of food they are consuming on a daily basis.

"Health-wise, the USAF beneficiary population is reflective of the country as a whole; but our mobile population needs solutions that provide care no matter where the patient is," said Lt Col Debra Malone, MD. "The tools developed by the UPDI - once implemented - could provide comprehensive diabetes education and lifestyle interventions that can be administered anywhere, at any time. The Air Force is eager to implement the tools so that its beneficiaries can receive the information they need to prevent and or manage diabetes."

The mission of the UPDI and UPMC is to provide and support diabetes prevention, detection, education, treatment and research. One of the country's few programs focusing on the translation of diabetes research into practice, the UPDI is dedicated to delivering state-of-the-art treatments to everyone with diabetes, and to those at risk.